

## New assistant director joins medical center

There's a new set of eyes looking out for quality patient care at the Atlanta VA Medical Center, and they belong to Thomas Grace. With only two weeks on station, the accountability- and data-driven Grace is up and running.

He joins the medical center as the assistant director and will oversee Engineering Service, Logistics, Customer Service, Environmental Management Service, Safety and Medical Media. Grace will also cover Information Technology, Prosthetics and Canteen vending and retail services.

The Georgia State University alumni earned a masters degree in both health and business administration. Grace is a 1992 graduate of the Georgia Institute

of Technology, and most recently, the Executive Career Field Candidate Development Program.

In a brief interview, he revealed a few of his ideas about joining the Atlanta team.

**Q:** This is your first assignment as an assistant director. What are your plans to support the medical center's mission?

**A:** Everyone here plays an intricate role in providing excellent care. My



goal is to ensure the staff and faculty have the means to provide the best possible care to the veterans we serve.

**Q:** What in your past experiences has prepared you for this position?

**A:** I've been in the healthcare field for 17 years, 15 of which have been with the VA.

[Grace served as Chief of Systems Analysis and Management at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System in Temple, Texas; a health system specialist and the business manager for the primary care service line at the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin; an administrator

**See Grace on back page**

## Briefly ...

### Magnet Site Visit set for May

The Atlanta VAMC received GREAT NEWS last week regarding our Magnet Journey!

We were officially offered a Magnet Site Visit and are confirmed for the dates of May 27 - 29, 2009 for the visit. Our hard work has paid off, and we are well on our way to becoming a Magnet organization!

The Magnet Recognition Program is sponsored by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and recognizes excellence in nursing practice, it is also an achievement involving the entire organization.

This is great news for our staff, the veterans we serve and for our VISN. We would not be at this point in the process if it were not for the incredible care and services that we provide every day and our sustained commitment to excellence. We are proud of our accomplishments thus far and look forward to the upcoming site visit.

### Director accepts Wii game challenge

Mizanael Phillips, a resident in the Eagle's Nest Community Living Center (CLC), challenged James Clark, director,

Atlanta VA Medical Center (VAMC), to a Wii bowling match scheduled April 16 at 10 a.m. in the CLC.

Phillips, a double-leg amputee who has resided at the Eagle's Nest the past four years, plays the Wii Sports video game as part of his rehabilitation.

According to Atlanta VAMC recreation therapists Thomas Porter and Chauncey Rozier, Wii video games and similar programs are motivational and helpful when used in physical therapy settings.

Meanwhile Phillips said, he's ready to roll against the director. "I've been practicing over the past several weeks," he said. "Mr. Clark has always provided tremendous support to residents here and graciously accepted my invitation for a friendly bowling match and I'm looking forward to it."

### Annual Earth Day observance scheuled

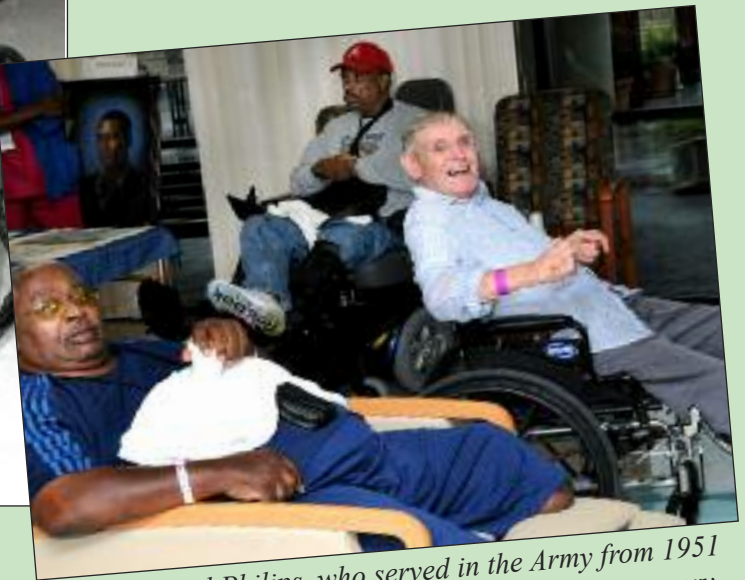
The Atlanta VA Medical Center will hold its annual Earth Day observance April 22 from 10:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Environmental awareness exhibits will be displayed in the atrium, Canteen and possibly outdoors near the parking deck. For more information, call Larry B. Dixon at ext. 1569.





*Louise Verhoye, a restorative assistant at the Eagle's Nest Community Living Center, dances with Horace Ransom, a resident, during the Creative Arts Festival held March 26 in the center's cafeteria. Ransom served in the Army from 1942 until 1945. He and other residents displayed their creative talents through art-work, carvings and dance. Below, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post # 66 provided refreshments.*



*Left, Mizanuel Philips, who served in the Army from 1951 to 1966, and Walter Price (center), an Army Veteran serving from 1946 through 1959, dance in their chairs. In the rear, John Starkey, an Army veteran of 1972 through 1976, waits for his favorite song to be played.*



*Joe Gress, an employee in the Housekeeping Department, drew this portrait with pencil.*







Left to right, 'Just the Guys' band members are: Eldridge Jackson and Allan Humphries. Both performers are former Prosthetic Department employees. Thomas Johnson, on lead guitar, is a current Prosthetic Department employee.



Festival attendees dance to live music provided by 'Just the Guys' band. Band members volunteered to provide their talents for the festival. It is their way of giving back to veterans who have given so much.



Above, Althea Womack, an outpatient resident, painted this and similar art-work as therapy. Right, Donald Tedder, a Navy veteran who served from 1965 through 1972, proudly explains his home-made Indian artifacts.



## Wanna tell your story?

Input for the bi-monthly newsletter is due to Robin.Brown5@va.gov by the 1st and 15th of each month. Images to accompany the word document should be sent separately, yet in the same e-mail message.



## Spill center makes clean up easy

Wet floors from a spill can be an accident in waiting at the Atlanta VA Medical Center.

Safety is job one and patient safety is the top priority. Taking the time to clean-up spills helps to prevent serious injury to patients, staff and visitors.

Spill center kits are located along the main corridor in the following areas:

- Outside the retail store



- Prosthetic Services
- Occupational Health
- Primary Care clinic
- Mocha Delites coffee shop
- Near ice machines
- On the 7th, 8th and 9th floors
- Near the information booths
- Outpatient lobby

Spill center kits contain pocket clean-up pads that allow anyone to quick and easily clean up small spills,

such as coffee, water and soft drinks. Each pad can absorb up to 12 ounces of water-based liquid and a small amount of oil-based liquid.

The spill center is not designed to replace the chemical spill clean-up procedures already in place here; however, the provided material can immediately contain small spills.

In some cases, the pad can be used as a sponge to clean up any remaining residue until the spilled liquid is completely removed by housekeeping personnel.

The sooner you identify a spill and act, the potential accident can be reduced.

For more information on medical center safety, call Derick Jones at ext. 5159.

*"I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody."*

-- Bill Cosby, comedian, author, TV producer and activist.

## Grace continued from cover

for a primary care clinic at the VA Outpatient Clinic in Lawton, Okla.; and interned for two years at the VA Medical Center in Asheville, N.C., as an administrative resident and a health systems specialist trainee.]

**Q:** What was your first impression of the Atlanta VA Medical Center?

**A:** I'm still assessing my new environment, but I have seen lots of examples of excellent customer service. I was attracted to the medical center because of the reputation Atlanta has for excellence and high quality leadership, and the hospital has a great affiliation with Emory. The quality of employees here makes this assignment a golden opportunity.

**Q:** Why have you chosen to serve veterans?

**A:** My father and grandfather both served in uniform. I was lucky enough to have grown up during peace time; however, I recognize the sacrifices of generations of men and women who have served. It is my honor to provide excellent service for those who have given so much to this country. The idea of public service appeals to me and serving veterans is a perfect fit. I want to make sure they receive the care they deserve.

## Educational event planned for sons, daughters at medical center May 6

Bring Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day at the Atlanta VA Medical Center is set for May 6.

The deadline to register your child is April 17.

This year's theme is "Building Partnerships to Educate and Empower."

Volunteers are needed to assist with activities to create an enriching educational experience.

For more information, call Brook Bloxson at ext. 6181 or Marie Giarniero at ext. 4651.



## Reminder

### Voluntary Leave Transfer Program —

The following are approved participants in the VLTP and are eligible to receive annual leave donations.

Atlanta Vet Center-Anita Salamon.

Logistics-Omega Dunn.

Patient Care-Erma Boykin, Brandy Davis.

Pharmacy-Sharita Reese, Karonda Benton.

Extended Care- Deborah Campbell.

Primary Care- Hadiyah Oluremi-McCutcheon, Shereta Jones.

To make a leave donation, call Freida Philpotts at ext. 6306 or Marie Robinson at ext. 4376 for help completing form OF-630A.